

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 1 and 7-12; claims 13, 14 and 16 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully submits no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-12, 15 and 17 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claims 9-16. As the Examiner has suggested, claims 9-16 have been rewritten in independent form including all limitation of the base claims and any intervening claims. Therefore no amendments have been made to narrow the scope of the pending claims or to create any sort of estoppel.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter as the invention. Claims 13, 14 and 16 have been canceled rendering the rejection of these claims moot. The language objected to in the claims has been removed or amended to correct the problems pointed out by the examiner. The Applicants have corrected the deficiencies in claims 1 and 5-12. Claims 1 and 5-12 have been amended to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter the Applicant regards as the invention.

The Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-12, 15 and 17 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 3, 4, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Seki et al, US 5,771,224 (hereinafter, Seki). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims.

The Applicant has canceled claims 13, 14 and 16 and combined the allowable subject matter of those claims with the subject matter of claim 1. The Applicant submits that amended claim 1 is now allowable over the Seki reference and requests the allowance of claim 1.

Claims 3, 4 and 7 depend from amended claim 1 and recite further limitations in combination with the novel elements of claim 1. Therefore, the allowance of claims 1, 3, 4 and 7 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 2, 5, 6, 8, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seki. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of these claims. In order to expedite allowance of this application, the Applicant has canceled the claims 13, 14 and 16 without prejudice and amended independent claim 1 with the allowable subject matter represented by these claims.

Now that claim 1 includes allowable subject matter, the Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over Seki and dependent claims 2, 5, 6, 8 and 17 are also allowable over the Seki reference. Therefore, the allowance of claims 2, 4, 6, 8 and 17 is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Not Relied Upon

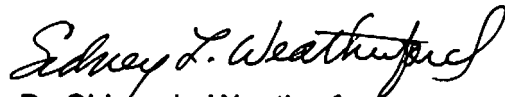
In paragraph 8 on page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated that the prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the Applicant's disclosure.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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